



All MPs in England and Wales

MoJ ref: 101557

7 December 2022

Dear Colleague,

LAUNCH OF THE 24/7 RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE SUPPORT LINE

I am writing to inform you that today, 7 December, we have launched the 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line which offers free and confidential emotional support to all victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse over the age of 16.

The 24/7 emotional support and listening service will provide victims and survivors who have experienced any form of sexual violence at any point in their life with access to specially trained advisers via telephone and webchat, with additional resources available online. Having access to help at any hour of the night or day will mean that no survivor is ever left without somewhere to turn. Anyone who contacts the service will be listened to, believed, and supported to make their own choices about what they would like to do next.

Where appropriate the service will point them to specialist support such as Independent Sexual Violence Advisers, Sexual Assault Referral Centre and local Rape Support Centres. We know that having access to support means that survivors are much more likely to feel believed and are less likely to suffer long-lasting trauma. Victims who speak to an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser are 49 percent less likely to withdraw from the criminal justice process. The more support a survivor receives the more perpetrators we will be able to bring before the courts.

We have worked in collaboration with our delivery partner, Rape Crisis England and Wales, who are bringing over 30 years' experience running specialist helplines and will be operating this new service.

The support line is a key part of our plan to transform outcomes for victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence. In June 2021, we published the cross-system Rape Review Report and Action Plan. We are delivering this by:

- More than quadrupling funding for victim support from to £192 million by 2024/25;
- Increasing the number of Independent Sexual and Domestic Abuse Advisors to over 1,000 by 2024/25;
- Completing the rollout of pre-recorded cross-examination for victims of sexual and modern slavery offences in all Crown Courts in England and Wales in September;
- Working with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to roll out a new investigatory model for rape, which focuses on the suspect's rather than the victim's behaviour, called Operation Soteria. This has begun operating across nineteen police forces, with a full national rollout ready from June 2023.

We are starting to see progress – rape convictions in 2021 were up by two thirds compared to the year before, and custodial sentences for this crime have increased by nearly two years in the latest year. But there is much more to do – and ensuring that all victims and survivors of rape and sexual violence have access to quality support, appropriate to their needs, when they need it is a key part of the work we are doing to tackle rape and serious sexual assault.

The 24/7 Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Line is available via telephone on: 0808 500 2222 and online at: 247sexualabusesupport.org.uk. I would be grateful if you could share this information and promote this service to your constituents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Raab', with a stylized flourish at the end.

RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP